gerial, subsidy for appointment of paid secretaries, and subsidy for distribution of Janata cloth-Assistance is also given by the State Govt. to the Societies for opening of sales depots. A 20 per cent rebate on retail sales of handloom goods is offered by the Central and State Govt. on a matching basis for 30 days in a year. The State Government also undertakes publicity for propagating the sales of handloom cloth.

Minimum wages for Agricultural labourers

96. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what are the current minimum wages prescribed by State Government for agricultural labourers, State-wise;

(b) on what criteria these minimum wages are fixed by the State Governments and whether there is any uniform policy followed by them in this regard;

(c) whether Government are aware of large scale violation of these minimum wages in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; and

(d) if so, what remedial measures are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) A statement giving the minimum rates of wages prescribed by State Governments for agricultural labourers is attached (See Appendix CXLI, Annexure No. 5]

(b) No specific and uniform criteria for fixing rates of minimum wages is provided in the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Each State Govt./U.T. Administration assesses its local conditions and follows suitable criteria while fixing the minimum wages.

(c) and (d) The Sttae Governments are advised from time to time to ensure strict compliance of Minimum wages Act.

Working of National Handloom Development Corporation

97. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) when and with what objectives the National Handloom Development Corporation was constituted;

(b) how far these objectives have been achieved; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to make the Corporation more purposeful and more effective?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) The Government of India have set up the National Handloom Development Corporation in February, 1983 under the Companies Act, 1956. The main objectives of the Corporation are as follows:—

(i) To supply raw materials like yarn, dyes and other inputs to the handloom weavers by supplementing the efforts of State Handloom agencies;

(ii) To augment the marketing efforts of the State handloom agencies; and

(iii) To take up developmental activities of upgrading the technology in handloom sector and for increasing productivity.

(b) (i) The Corporation has established its Regional Offices at Guwahati, Coimbatore and Bombay. It is at present supplying yarn to State handloom agencies of Maharashtra, Bihar, Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, North Eastern States and Union Territory of Pondicherry, etc. It is also supplying dyes and chemicals to several States.

(ii) In order to support the marketing effort of State handloom agencies, the Corporation has organised marketing complexes at Jaipur, Cochin and Calcutta where several state government corporations/societies have opened their showrooms.

It has also taken up consignment sales of the handloom products of state handloom agencies.

(iii) As regards the developmental activities, the Corporation has been organising Workshops and Seminars on marketing strategies, quality control, etc. It has also undertaken training of dyers. A National Advertising and Communication Campaign and an Exhibition of Appropriate Technology in the Handloom Sector have also been taken up.

(c) Share capital assistance to the tune of Rs. 4.14 crores have so far been released to the Corporation. Further, share capital/loan assistance will be provided during the VII Five Year Plan. Efforts are being made to provide working capital from commercial banks as Priority Sector Advance in order to enable the Corporation to augment its supplies of raw materials. The activities of the Corporation have recently been classified into commercial and developmental activities and Central Government is providing grant to finance the developmental activities from time to time.

Opening of Regional passport offices in Madhya Pradesh

98. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of being the largest State (area-wise) in the country in Madhya Pradesh only one Regional Passport Office is situated at Bhopal;

(b) whether Government take into account the area of a state while deciding the number of branches of Passport Office to be located in a State;

(c) whether Government will consider locating regional Passport Offices at places like Raipur, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur and Rewa; and

(d) if the answer to part (c) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) For the past few years the Govt. has been following the principals for having one Passport Office in each State unless the number of Passport applications from that State is too small which would not justify expenditure on opening a Passport office in that State.

As per the norms fixed by the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance a Passport Issuing Authority must deal with atleast 3000 passport applications per month. The total number of passport applications received by the Passport Office Bhopal was 1177 on an average per month. Thus, there is no justification for opening a new Passport Office in Madhya Pradesh.

US public policy planning organisation Survey regarding Indo-Pak relations

99. SHRI VITHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that research survey has been conducted by the Public Policy Planning Organisation of the United States in connection with Indo-Pak relations;

(b) whether it is a fact that the survey has revealed that Pakistan is likely to attack India in near future; and

(c) whether Government have drawn the attention of Pakistani External Affairs Minister in this regard during the recent talks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Government are aware of a recent study by